

## THE WORLD



KY AFTER BOMBING SORTIE  
Wise to the limits of power.

## SOUTH VIET NAM

## Pilot with a Mission

(See Cover)

In his eight months as Premier, South Viet Nam's Nguyen Cao Ky had best been known as an atavistic aviator—the flamboyant, Von Richthofen-like figure of a fighter pilot, replete with mustache and a wisp of lavender silk knotted at his throat. Followers of Viet Nam's recent raucous history could argue for hours over whether he was the sixth or ninth Premier in the last 18 months; few took a close look at Ky and his accomplishments. But under the spotlight of Lyndon Johnson's U.S.-Vietnamese summit in Honolulu, the high-flying aviator finally came down to earth.

In public speech and private colloquy last week, Ky showed himself eloquent and honest, astute and independent, and above all a man who cared passionately about the defense and the welfare of his nation. Far from being a trigger-happy general, he demonstrated an awareness and concern for the task of nation-building that was the equal of the President's. It was, after all, Ky's Jan. 15 speech in Saigon, with its heavy emphasis on social justice, that had catalyzed Johnson's instinct for a nation-building summit in the first place. Or, as Ky candidly put it in Honolulu: "We were deluding ourselves with the idea that our weaknesses could not be remedied while fighting a war. It has taken a long time to realize that we will not completely drive out the aggressor until we make a start at eliminating political and social defects."

**Strangling City.** The solution for South Viet Nam's weaknesses is as easy to state as it is agonizingly difficult to accomplish. That simple truth, so often drowned out by the thunder of guns in Viet Nam, is everywhere evident. Over half of South Viet Nam's land and some 50% of its people are sequestered be-

yond Saigon's control—which means that it is the Viet Cong's furtive "infrastructure" of tax collectors, clerks and cops that rules these areas. All but 600 miles of the nation's railways have long since been rusting in disuse, no major highway is safe for any distance, the normal arterial flows of the nation—from rice to electricity—are interdicted or bleeding.

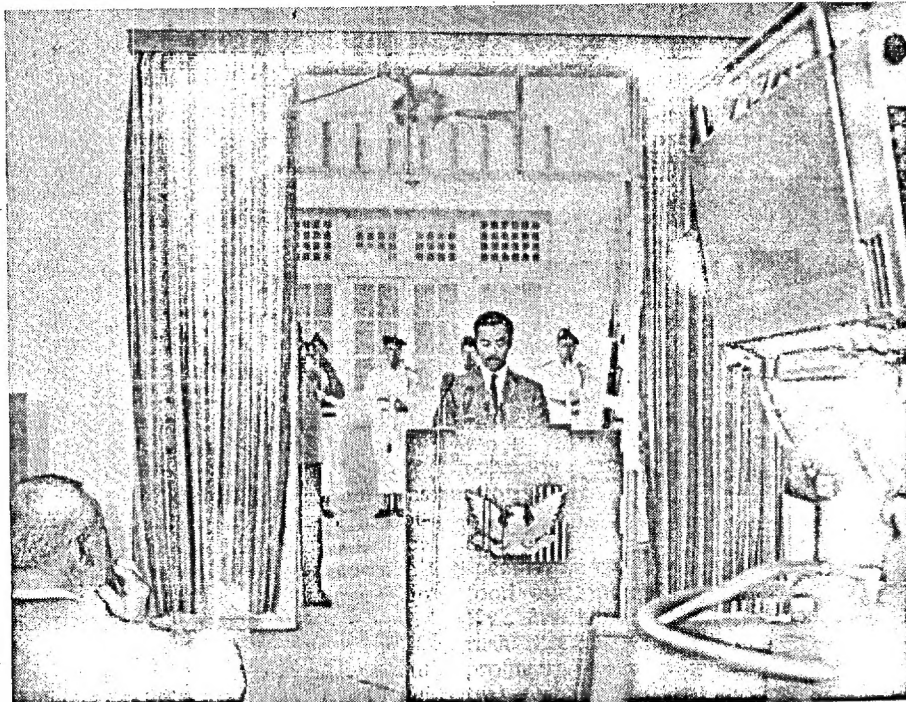
Even Saigon itself, once a graceful and gracious French city, is sadly strangling. In some parts of the city, garbage is rarely collected and mountains of sidewalk filth have accumulated. Potholed streets go unrepaired, bus service is unpredictable, goods scarce, housing either unavailable or astronomical in price. Prostitutes, pimps and black-marketeers abound; prices have soared 58% in a year. "What's really changed about the city in the last few years is the level of law and civic discipline," says one Saigon official sadly. "It's almost a jungle now."

It could have been worse. But in the year since President Johnson promised to defend South Viet Nam with the full weight of U.S. arms, morale has improved immeasurably. Largely silenced were the quarrels between Catholics and Buddhists, the demonstrations of students, the simmering discontent in sections of the armed forces—all of which, at one time or another, and often in concert, had triggered antigovernment coups and "coup-ettes" in the past. For the first time since Diem, a government was given a breathing space—not only a chance to

rule, but also to consider nation-building as well as war.

**Tough Northerner.** Ky and his fellow officers of the ruling Directory had no illusions about the magnitude of their task from the beginning. As Chief of State General Nguyen Van Thieu observed in justifying the generals' takeover, the body politic was raddled with "contemptible acts of profiteering, theft, swindling, bribery, oppression of the weak, shirking of responsibility while receiving government pay, misappropriation of public funds, illegal transfer of funds to foreign countries, sabotaging the national economy, hoarding, and speculating on such prime necessities as food and medicines." Indeed, one of Ky's first statements as Premier was a rash threat to shoot all rice and salt profiteers. When the police finally caught two suspects, the evidence proved inconclusive and the men were quietly released. Ky has matured to his heavy responsibilities.

He had quite a way to go. Scarcely had Ky taken office when it was reported he had suggested that South Viet Nam needed someone like Hitler to solve its problems. Later he lamely explained that he was only endorsing Hitler's "leadership and sense of discipline, not his inhuman methods"—but that was still more comfort to Ky's enemies than to his friends. In his first few months as Premier, he was several times so depressed by the complexities of the job that he threatened to resign. He also complained to U.S. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge, with whom he has a tie



KY ON TV  
War for the hearts of the people.

of near-filial rapport, that he resented having to spend so much time with politicians and newsmen. Lodge pointed out that Lyndon Johnson is in much the same fix; since then, Ky has noticeably relaxed about the inevitable public duties of his job. And for all his indiscretions and growing pains, Ky has worked earnestly and hard as Premier, battling conditions that were often beyond his control. "Indeed," says one member of his staff, "if Ky weren't a tough damned Northerner, he wouldn't have survived this long."

**Pearl & Black.** A Northerner Ky is, having been born in Son Tay, just west of Hanoi. After high school in what is now the Communist capital, he earned an infantry commission from an officers' training school. The French plucked the cocky young lieutenant off his feet and sent him to Marrakech for flight training. He won his wings on Sept. 15, 1954—just four months after the French defeat in Indo-China. Ky came back to South Viet Nam with a French wife and the command of a transport squadron. By the time he was 25, the hard-boiled "hot rock" pilot was in charge of Saigon's sprawling Tan Son Nhut air force base. From there, Ky jumped to his first look at the U.S.—six months at the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Field, Ala. Brief as it was, the tour permitted Ky to learn colloquial English and, says Lodge semifacetiously, "read the newspapers every day and learn what Americans are all about." Within five years of his return to Saigon, Ky was a major military figure—and commander of the entire South Vietnamese air force.

Ky was easily the gaudiest aviator in Asia. His trademark was a black flying suit—a legacy of secret night missions over North Viet Nam in 1964, dropping saboteurs. Afraid he might be dropped by Red ground fire himself, Ky designed the black suit to be less visible swinging from a parachute against the night sky. He also affected pearl-handled pistols in the cockpit, and has a considerable gun collection, to which he added in Honolulu with the purchase of a .357 Magnum and a symbolically-named Colt .45 Peacemaker. He also picked up a .22 revolver for the demure Madame Ky, a beautiful former Air Viet Nam stewardess whom he married after the divorce of his first wife. With 4,000 hours' flying time, Ky has only partly succeeded in letting his duties as Premier ground him. On a state visit to Formosa recently, he took time out to try a U.S. F-104 Starfighter, snapping smartly through a linked series of barrel rolls and wingovers. He commutes from his home—a converted office building at Tan Son Nhut Airport—to Gia Long Palace flying his own Alouette helicopter.

Long before he became Premier, Ky as air force chief had his flyers emulating his style—and loyal to a man. As "warlord of the air," Ky found himself with a power base that inevitably drew

him into Saigon's politics. He became a protégé of goateed General Nguyen Khanh, who promoted Air Commodore Ky to the Anglicized altitude of air vice-marshal. In return, Ky twice scrambled his Skyraiders over Saigon to stave off coup attempts against Khanh's government—once even resorting to the cold threat to flatten Saigon with bombs if the rebels refused to cease and desist. Ky probably would not have carried out the threat, but the plotters could never be sure. They ceased and desisted.

On a third try, however, Ky and oth-

er cut in half top civilian government salaries, including his own as Premier (now \$6,500 a year). He severed diplomatic relations with France over Charles de Gaulle's continued mugwumping with Hanoi and Peking. He also refused resolutely to yield his command of the air force, well aware it was his best protection against yet another coup—as well as the prime source of his influence in the directory of generals.

For influence it is, not dominance. Viet Nam today is, in essence, governed by military committee. The Pre-



THIEU, THI & KY AT PRESS CONFERENCE

*If you can understand this, you will be a beautiful American!*

er young officers decided Khanh had lost his charm. As a general from the older generation, Khanh seemed to the young Turks lacking in the flexibility and idealism that South Viet Nam's social revolution required. Partly out of ambition, partly out of impatience, the younger officers themselves turned Khanh out, replaced him with a civilian physician and moderate, Dr. Phan Huy Quat, and his "medicine Cabinet." The officers genuinely wanted Quat's civilian government to work so that they could concentrate on prosecuting the war. But without a firm hand, all the old religious and fractional rivalries erupted anew. Quat asked the generals to take over, and reluctantly they did—in the first peaceful transition of power that Saigon had seen since the death of Diem.

**A Delicate Matter.** Ky very quickly began to learn the limits of power in Saigonese politics. Though hardly known for quiet nights at home himself, he tried to slap a curfew on Saigon's teeming bars and brothels, only to back down—mainly because in a tense war capital, revelry is almost an essential. But he also produced some welcome surprises. Acknowledging the obvious, he declared war on North Viet Nam. Then, with the nation legally at war, he doubled army pay (from \$33 to \$66 a

mier's role, as Ky himself explains it, is "a very delicate matter, in which many things must be kept balanced. The way we work is that my colleagues decide what they want done and then I try to carry it out."

**The Directory.** Part of the balance is in the makeup of the ten generals themselves. The Directory is divided between Catholics and Buddhists, Northerners and Southerners, staff officers like Ky and commanders of Viet Nam's four embattled corps areas and the capital military region.

Ky, in fact, is not even nominally the top man. That hat belongs to Directory Chairman and Chief of State Nguyen Van Thieu, 42, a brainy, sophisticated survivor of nearly every government since Diem, who provides a quiet balance to Ky's occasional impulsiveness. Of the line commanders, both the III Corps and the Capital Military Region are in the hands of generals born in North Viet Nam—and close friends of Ky. The Mekong Delta, or the IV Corps, is the domain of Major General Dan Van Quang, 36, a rough soldier whose girth and ready laughter have earned him the nickname "Jolly Green Giant" from his American advisers.

But by far the most powerful of the



corps commanders is Lieut. General Nguyen Chanh Thi, 40, tough boss of the I Corps. A sound tactician, charismatic speaker and careful planner, Thi is the one man in the Directory thought to covet Ky's job. Dapper and mustachioed, flanking fierce badges and gaudy scarves, he even resembles Ky. Thi, who was exiled by Diem after an abortive 1960 coup, could probably take the job any time he chose. Among his other assets, he can count his hand-picked head of the nation's 50,000-man police force. So far, to the benefit of South Viet Nam, which needs stability in Saigon as much as victories on the battlefield, Thi has not made his move.

**Prickly Sensitivity.** So far the collegium has been happy to let Ky have the headlines—and do the public honors that professional military men often find onerous. Ky has become the closest thing to a national hero cynical South Viet Nam has, is often besieged by admiring youngsters when he goes out in the streets. Sometimes Ky's flair still gets the better of him. On a recent visit to a village just liberated from the Viet Cong, Ky and his wife Mai intended to show their interest in the peasants. Snipers were firing, and it would have worked well, except that Ky and Mai arrived in matching jet-black flight suits, purple scarves, flight boots and blue flying caps. The villagers were struck dumb. "Good God," said a watching American, "they look like Captain and Mrs. Midnight."

Some U.S. officials in Saigon fear that Ky's flair, and above all his rapport with Americans, may well prove his undoing. It was probably no accident that yet another spate of coup rumors began to float through Saigon behind the news of Ky's impressive confrontation with Johnson in Hawaii. "We killed Khanh that way," ruminates one U.S. old hand in Saigon, recollecting how the U.S. Mission backed Khanh even when it was clear that the Young Turks had lost faith in his leadership. "And we are in real danger," he adds, "of killing Ky the same way." Ky, at least, is well aware of the prickly sensitivity of South Vietnamese pride, and indeed shares some



MADAME KY  
*Sometimes like Mrs. Midnight.*

of it. "For better or worse," Ky often insists, "it is up to me and others like me to create a new society in South Viet Nam. You cannot do it for us. We must do it ourselves."

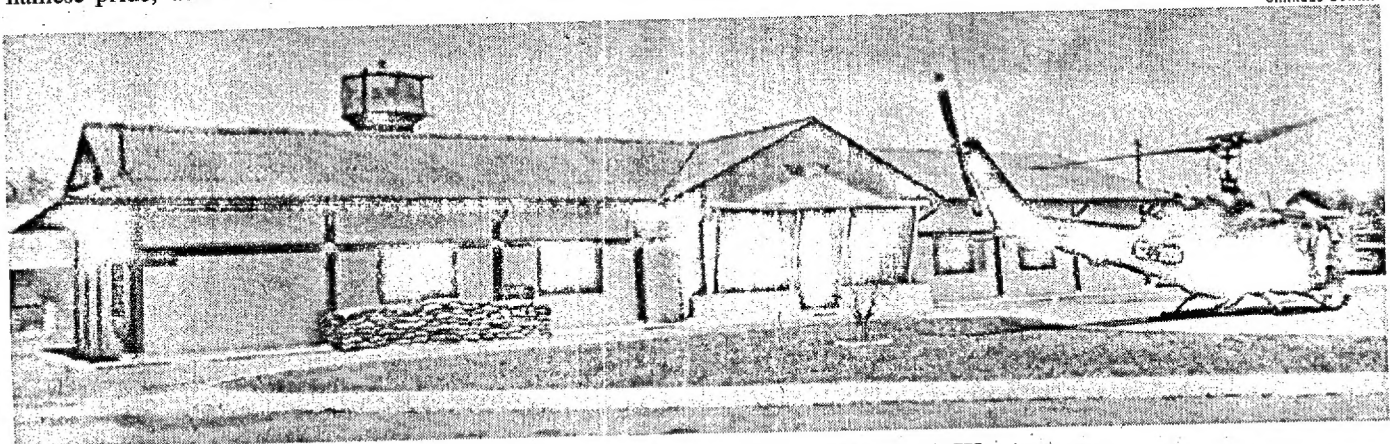
**Calm in the Dark.** Ky was just as frank in Honolulu with Johnson. He publicly urged the U.S. to bomb the port of Haiphong, insisted Saigon would never negotiate with the Viet Cong, rejected the Geneva accords as a basis for negotiations—all points on which Johnson disagrees with him. "I know," said Ky, "that at times your advisers lose patience with us. But I don't think it is any secret that at times we lose patience with your advisers." It is a frankness the U.S. appreciates and needs in Viet Nam politics—not least because it is a guarantee of honesty. Nonetheless, said Ky, "we are making progress," and proceeded to tick it off in terms of classrooms built, land reform, medical centers, housing starts. "When you speak of building hospitals and schools and rural electrification programs," responded John-

son, "you are speaking our language." But it was the President's private sessions with Ky and Chief of State Thieu that put muscle on the skeleton of public rhetoric in Honolulu. Sitting in the overstuffed chairs of Johnson's living room in the Grand Hyatt Hawaiian, the President urged acceptance by the Vietnamese of a U.S. blueprint for curbing the nation's runaway inflation—and got it. He urged reform in tax administration, citing as an example Argentina, which had increased its income by a third through collection reforms alone. "That is what we want to do," said Ky: develop new cadres of honest young men who would collect taxes properly.

Using his prosecuting-attorney technique, Johnson suddenly wheeled on Ky and demanded: "If you were General Giap [chief of the North Vietnamese forces], what would you do to cause us the most trouble?" Ky replied in considerable—and secret—detail. When Johnson turned to U.S. Commander in Viet Nam, General Westmoreland, to ask the same questions, the lights suddenly failed in the hotel. Without breaking stride, the interrogation proceeded by candlelight until the lights snapped back on again seven minutes later. When Ky insisted that the Viet Cong would wage economic war against the South, illustrating the point with an explanation of how disruption of the pig market could cause harmful swings in prices, L.B.J. picked up the phone and called U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman. The message to the Secretary: to take a hog expert along with him to Saigon to look into the marketing setup in pigs.

**"We Have Not Changed."** Meanwhile, the nearly 200 experts and advisers from both sides in Honolulu had drafted a declaration and a communiqué describing the two-pronged effort that henceforth the allies would wage in Viet Nam. One prong was the vigorous prosecution of the war, the other a conjoint attack on South Viet Nam's failings as a nation. To help ram the second prong home, the U.S. indicated that it was willing to

CHARLES BONNAY



PREMIER KY'S TAN SON NHUT HOME & PRIVATE HELICOPTER  
*Not an inch of land for a hard-boiled hot rock.*

double its current nonmilitary aid of \$300 million to South Viet Nam.

The conference over, Ky and Thieu appeared for a final press conference. Nervous at first, sipping coffee and chain-smoking Salem cigarettes, Ky parried questions impatiently. When a reporter started to ask a question about dealing with the enemy's National Liberation Front, Ky cut him off: "No, it should be called the National Assassination Front." Later, as Thieu answered the last question, Ky leaped to the microphone for a final impromptu word.

"More than anything we love peace, we are not warmongers," Ky said in a tremulous, deep voice, poking his chest with his forefinger. "All we are trying to do in South Viet Nam now is to stop aggression. It is not good to be a young man and to risk your life daily. But that must be done. I do not even own my own car, not even an old second-hand American car. I do not even own an inch of land. If you can hear and understand all of this, then you will be a big, beautiful American."

The U.S., by its renewed pledge in Honolulu to fight the other half of the war in Viet Nam, the hidden war for the simplest welfare of the Vietnamese people, had been clearly heard and understood. But much depended on Nguyen Cao Ky and his fellow officers in the weeks and months ahead. As the Premier told several thousand waiting at the Saigon airport on his return from the summit: "When we took power, we said we were a government of the poor, the oppressed. We have not changed, but today we bring back the full assistance of the U.S. in our fight against oppression and against poverty."

### The Job of Nationhood

"The United States," said the Declaration of Honolulu, "will give its full support to measures of social revolution based upon the principle of building upward from the hopes of all the people of Viet Nam."

By any standard, the U.S. has taken on an enormous task. U.S. aid will be needed for everything from installing social justice in the hamlets and combatting inflation to improving farm practices and—most important—inspiring in South Viet Nam's 16 million war-weary people a sense of nationhood.

Actually, it is an art in which the U.S. should excel, considering its success in revitalizing the war-scarred Western European nations and Japan. The difference is that those countries were already mature national states with well-developed economies.

Viet Nam lacks political and economic adhesiveness. Its 2,600 villages mean 2,600 separate economies. It is poor even by Asian standards. Annual per capita income is only \$92 v. \$300 in nearby Malaysia. Though plagued by almost every type of tropical disease, Viet Nam has only 69 hospitals

## SOUTH VIET NAM'S OTHER WAR

(Nonmilitary personnel)

Priority area

GOVERNMENT Total: 22,838

Political Action (PATs), Census, and other

U.S. AID Total: 179

(Agency for International Development)

Prov. advisers and staff 106

Education 11

Agriculture 4

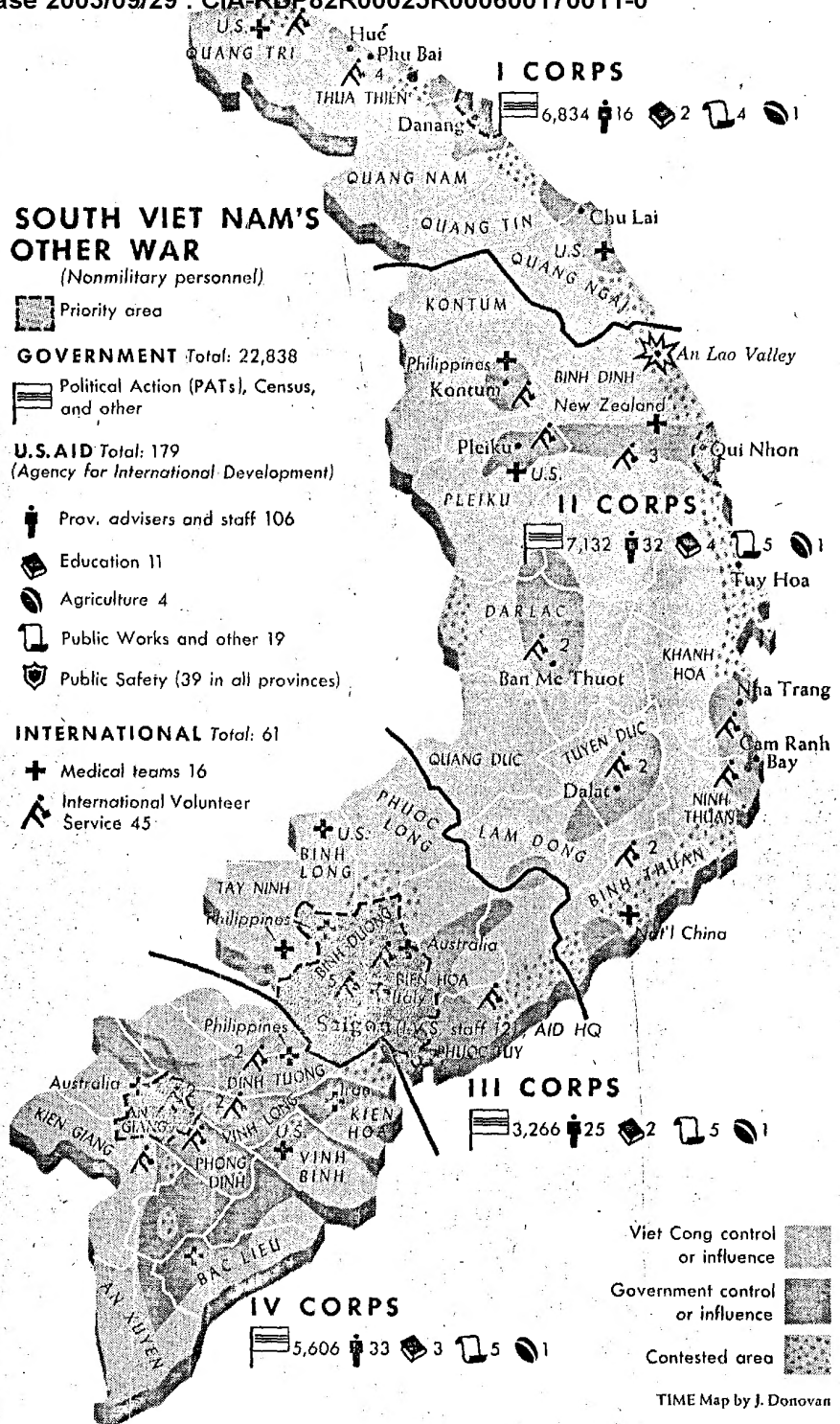
Public Works and other 19

Public Safety (39 in all provinces)

INTERNATIONAL Total: 61

Medical teams 16

International Volunteer Service 45



and only one doctor for every 28,000 people (v. one to every 645 in the U.S.). It has only 684 miles of railway, and much of that is now unusable. Piled on top of Viet Nam's other miseries are 442,000 refugees from Viet Cong-dominated areas who are crammed into reeking makeshift camps across the country.

Unfriendly to Foreigners. Nor has Viet Nam historically taken kindly to nation builders, most of whom were colonialists at heart. For more than a thousand years the Vietnamese stubbornly resisted assimilation into a Chinese kingdom, finally drove out the hated invaders from the north in A.D. 940. The French tried after World War II to mold Viet Nam into a tractable nation by vesting authority in a central government and playing off one village against another. Instead, the Viet Minh imposed a harsh unity in the countryside that broke the French grip. In South Viet Nam, President Ngo Dinh Diem hoped to form a nation that was safe from Viet Cong influence by gathering the peasants into fortified hamlets. That

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What hope is there that the present Vietnamese government and its U.S. backers will fare any better? For one thing, the military situation, thanks to the American buildup, has improved, so that the South Vietnamese government can now provide security to at least a fraction of its citizens. And security is the stuff of which loyalty is made. Says one U.S. expert: "The man behind the water buffalo wants above all to know that he's going to wake up alive tomorrow." Another thing is the positive attitude on the part of the government. Declares Premier Ky: "We can take this revolution away from the Communists. We can show the people that we can give them more and better things than the Communists—not only material things, but things the Communists do not even understand, like justice and personal integrity."

In his eight months in office, Ky has encouraged a number of plans for building that new society. By far, the most successful has been the Political Action Teams (PATs). Recruited from the countryside, PAT members undergo vigorous nationalist indoctrination (one of the slogans: "I'd rather be a dead man in Viet Nam than the emperor of China") at three training camps in Phuoc Tuy province, drill to deadeye perfection in the use of small arms, and master nursing, farming, and teaching skills. They learn to pursue their goal of defeating Communism according to the three Ts: *Thang* (victory), *Thuong* (love) and *Thanh* (sincerity). After graduation, the PATs (*Biet Chinh* in Vietnamese) return to their home areas.

Dressed in the ordinary black pajamas of the average peasant—and of the average Viet Cong—the PATs hunker down and talk politics with the local

listening to grievances about government abuses (PAT reports have caused the sacking or transfer of many South Vietnamese officials) and gathering information about Viet Cong activities. Packing impressive firepower (BARs, carbines, grenades), the PATs are first-class fighters. One PAT unit of 40 men in a village in Quang Ngai province went unassailed for three months before it came under attack one night by a battalion of Viet Cong. After fending off the assault for three hours, the PATs split into three squads. Two squads evacuated the 383 villagers across a river to safety while the third fought a rear-guard action, finally grabbed a sampan and, using it as a shield, swam safely across the river.

**Legends & Leaflets.** In addition to PATs, other propaganda troops are hitting the road. Pretty girls sing plaintive love songs, imploring their Viet Cong husbands to return and "take care of me." Storytellers recount misty legends of Viet Nam in hopes of awakening a sense of national destiny in the peasants. Sample legend: when Chinese invaders inundated Viet Nam in the second century B.C., the Vietnamese king demanded a hero to save the realm. None could be found. Finally, the king's men found a three-year-old mute, a boy with a sullen face who suddenly spoke. "Forge me an iron horse," he demanded. The king's men, nonplussed, complied. Then the child ate enough food for ten men at one sitting, grew instantly to heroic proportions. He mounted the iron steed and rode off to battle. When his sword shattered on Chinese helmets, he snatched up an entire clump of bamboo—roots and all—and carried through to victory. Then, deigning honors and adulation, the boy rode off to a high hill, and disappeared. As the mod-



RESSEGUIE & REFUGEES

After Starlight, V.C. winked back.

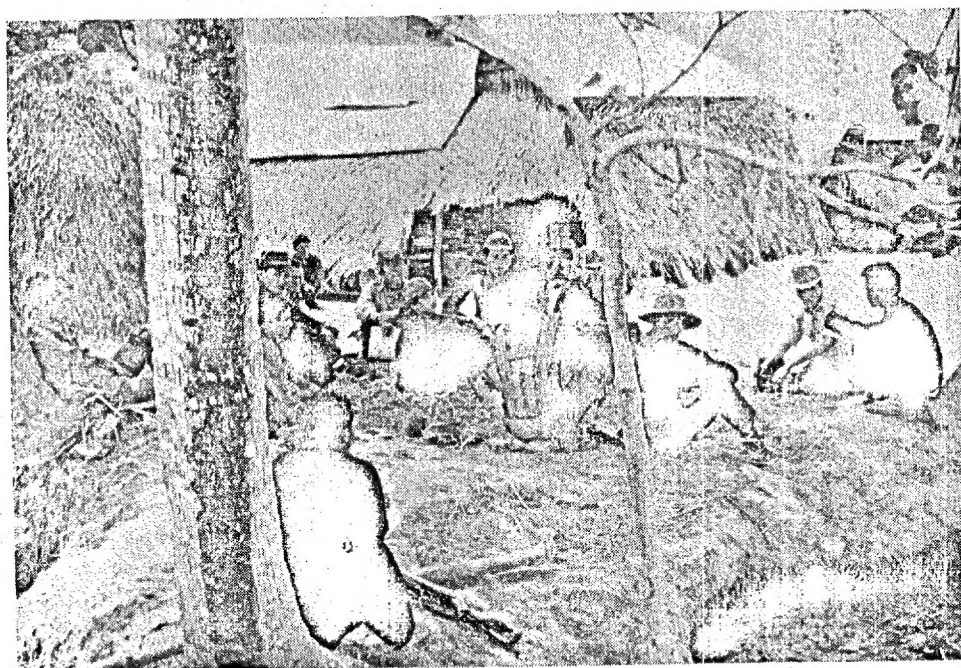
ern-day Vietnamese tell it in the hamlets, his sullen silence in the beginning of the tale represents Vietnamese apathy; his later heroics the heights to which Vietnamese spirits aspire.

How many of the peasants get the message is hard to tell. Psychological warfare units, both Vietnamese and U.S., drop no fewer than 3,000,000 leaflets weekly over Viet Cong strongholds. An ever-increasing number of Viet Cong are defecting each month (1,672 in January), and one-quarter of them testify that the leaflets helped influence their decision to switch sides.

Of course no leaflet is as effective as a personal contact, and many of the defectors, who are welcomed under the government's *Chieu Hoi* (Open Arms) amnesty program, go to work at once trying to persuade their former colleagues to give up. Other defectors become *Biet Kich*, a special force of irregulars who hunt the Viet Cong at night, stalking the enemy with V.C. methods. They take a deadly toll.

**Three Stages.** The pacification plan calls for three stages. First, U.S. troops will seek and smash Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces in selected areas. Next, the South Vietnamese army will move in and mop up what is left of the enemy. At that point, exit the army and enter the region's own police force and popular forces, ready to defend themselves. A key to making this phase work will be the white-uniformed national police force ("the white mice") under Colonel Pham Van Lieu, who are already showing promise of developing into an effective country-wide law-enforcement agency. As one American says: "If the mayor of Cedar Rapids has a crime problem, he calls the cops, not the army. We want every village headman to be able to do the same."

Guiding the program will be the new Rural Construction Cadres, which are



PATs AT WORK

Better dead than emperor of China.

simply an expanded form of the PATs. Some cadres will conduct a census of the village, issue identification cards and weed out Viet Cong suspects. Meanwhile, other cadres will start schools, provide medical services, help farmers get crops of rice and corn planted, organize local government and help train leaders. The final, far-off stage calls for free elections and handing the village governments over to local people.

In all this, the Vietnamese will be helped by a band of young Americans who are already risking their lives to bring aid and know-how to the countryside. So far, two AID men have been kidnapped and eight have died—in ambushes and assassinations—on this unsung duty. One new arrival is Steve Shepley, a 27-year-old New Yorker, who is USAID's action representative in the Delta province of An Xuyen. Put-tering unarmed in a 35-h.p. boat through the Viet Cong-infested paddies, he visits village after village, chatting with the people in fluent Vietnamese, assessing their needs, hauling in food and building supplies and organizing emergency housing and rations for refugees.

Another is Robert Resseguie, 25, a native of Madison, N.J., and a former Peace Corps worker in Thailand. He is now an assistant AID representative in Quang Ngai province, 300 miles northeast of Saigon. After the U.S. Marines had cleared an area of Viet Cong in last summer's Operation Starlight, Resseguie led nearly 20,000 refugees back to their deserted homes, helped provide them with food and building material. Unfortunately, as soon as Starlight winked out, the V.C. winked back in—an evidence of ineffective follow-through that has plagued pacification efforts all along.

**Fragile Existence.** The goals for 1966 are relatively modest. The campaign will center on four priority areas (see map). Ky hopes to clear and hold 900 new hamlets, consolidate government control in 1,000 already cleared villages, build 2,251 new classrooms, 568 miles of road, 57 dams, 148 bridges, and dig 118 miles of canal. Equally important is training more cadres, and that will take time. At present there are 22,838 trained men and women in the field, and by year's end, another 20,000 or so will join them. But at least 440,000 will be required to blanket every province.

Until these cadres are trained—and for a long time after—South Viet Nam's fragile existence will still depend on the protection of U.S. fighting men and the funds of U.S. taxpayers. American aid will rise to \$600 million or more this year, is apt to rise higher still as the U.S. underwrites the construction of the schools, power stations, hospitals, roads, ports, and communications systems that are essential for the creation of a viable nation and a healthy unified economy.

## Slow-Motion Diplomacy

Nobody hurried. Aboard his blue overnight train from Bonn, Ludwig Erhard snoozed for two hours on a siding along the Mosel so as not to get to Paris too soon. When he finally arrived at the Elysée Palace, Charles de Gaulle kept him waiting another 28 minutes. Then the French President strolled out to greet the West German leader with a smile, a handshake—and a glottal "*Bis Aufgleich Herr Bundeskanzler* [See you later, Mr. Chancellor]." With that they adjourned, to meet again an hour later for a leisurely lunch.

The slow-motion diplomacy in Paris last week was not for lack of topics to discuss. But such is the basically antagonistic state of Franco-German relations these days that any discussion between Europe's two most fidgety "friends" almost inevitably produces

prodding from West Germany. Erhard thought that it might be a good time to try for some progress toward political union of the Six. Some observers were even speculating that France might be willing to let Britain reapply for Market membership. But *le grand Charles* does not yet need English allies. He smoothly informed Erhard that the Common Market's first order of business was to "implement" the Luxembourg agreement—in other words: don't tempt France to walk out again.

Despite the lack of any major policy agreements, both French and German diplomats were cheered by the relaxed tone of the meetings. Ministers discussed down-to-earth topics such as the joint construction of a military land vehicle to supplant the Jeep and ways to standardize tax and social security systems. Said one German official: "The Franco-German couple has given up the bedroom and now meets in the kitchen."

REPORTERS ASSOCIÉS



ERHARD & DE GAULLE

*A graceful toast to practically nothing.*

major disagreements. What saved last week's semiannual session was Charles de Gaulle's grand finesse.

Erhard wanted assurance that De Gaulle, on his visit to Russia this spring, would not recognize East Germany or compromise the disputed Oder-Neisse border. Privately, De Gaulle was quite willing to offer such assurances. Not publicly, since that might dampen his Moscow welcome. The solution? A graceful (but fleeting) toast in champagne (Laurent Perrier '55) to "a united Germany."

The future of the Common Market was another subject to avoid. The French had agreed at Luxembourg last month to return to their vacant seat at Common Market headquarters largely because of some unexpectedly effective

## GREAT BRITAIN

### Revolts from the Left

With his narrow parliamentary majority, one might expect most of Harold Wilson's troubles to come from the Tory opposition. Last week, however, he was confronted by two revolts from within his own Labor ranks.

One was the threat of a nationwide railroad strike to protest the government's decision to hold wage increases to 3½% a year. Wilson met it smoothly. At the last minute, he simply went to the conference table and sweet-talked the union leaders into accepting the wage ceiling (with a few minor fringe benefits thrown in).

The second revolt demanded harsher treatment. It was an irate motion, signed by 35 backbench Laborite radicals, to condemn Wilson's support of U.S. policies in Viet Nam. The cause, of course, was "peace," and what rankled the radicals most was that Wilson had agreed with the U.S. decision to resume the bombing of North Viet Nam.

Wilson cut them dead: "If you search the hearts of some of those who participate in these campaigns," he said, "you will find not 'peace in Viet Nam' but 'victory in Viet Nam.' This means a continuation of the fighting until their side has won." From the backbenches, leftists were jumping up trying to get the floor, but Wilson slashed on.

"I would have been more impressed," he said, "if the international cables during the 40-day truce had been sizzling with messages to Hanoi saying, 'Now conditions for talks exist. Now play your part. Your friends in this country who want peace expect you to respond.' I'd like to have seen the peace-in-Viet Nam lobby outside the Chinese embassy demanding that the Chinese government diminish their malevolent pressures on Hanoi, preventing Hanoi from following what might be her natural inclinations to make peace."

The peace lobbyists' motion was nev-

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